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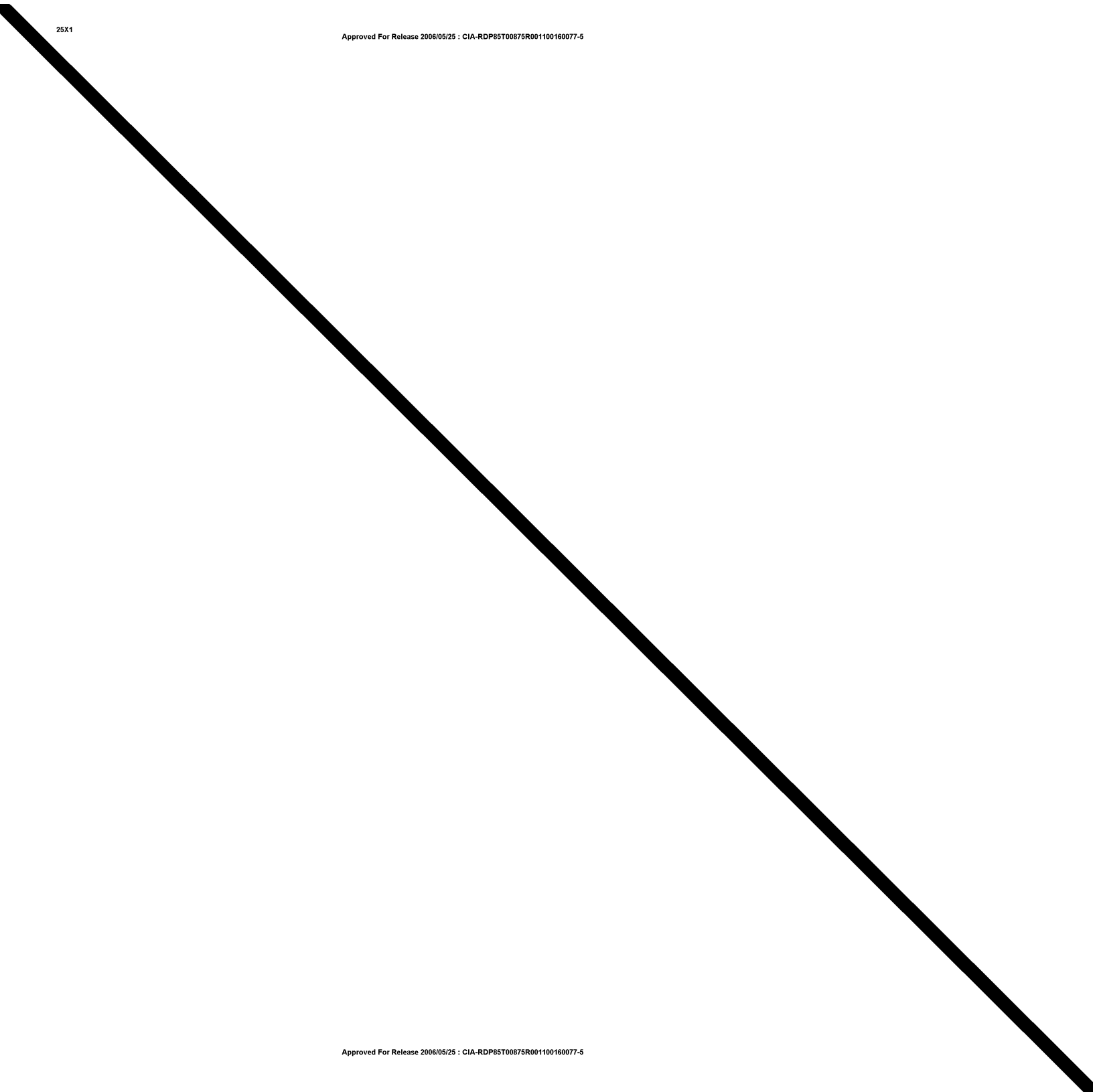

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Intelligence Memorandum

Possible Cease-Fire Lines in the Sinai and the Golan Heights, and a Discussion of the Jerusalem Situation

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30 October 1973

No. 2458/73

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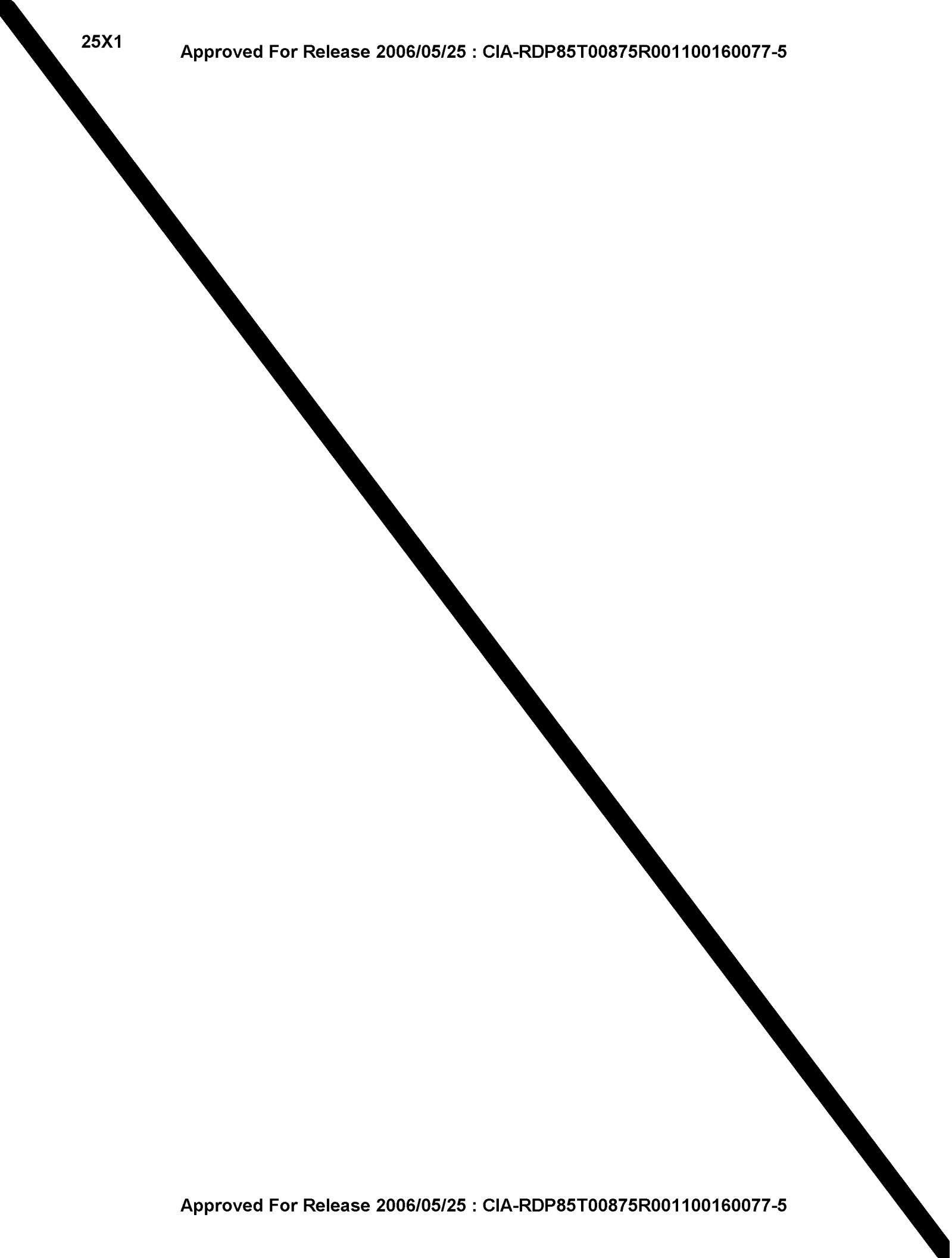

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Possible Cease-Fire Lines in the Sinai and the Golan Heights, and a Discussion of the Jerusalem Situation

Introduction

This paper presents alternative cease-fire lines for Arab and Israeli forces in the Sinai and the Golan Heights, discusses the situation in Jerusalem, and briefly comments on the Allon Plan. In selecting the positions and configurations of the lines, consideration has been given to pertinent terrain, economic, and sociological factors as well as to the current military and political situation. Together the proposed cease-fire lines provide a possible basis for a phased withdrawal. Each line would pose problems of major proportions for US policy; these are not discussed in the paper.

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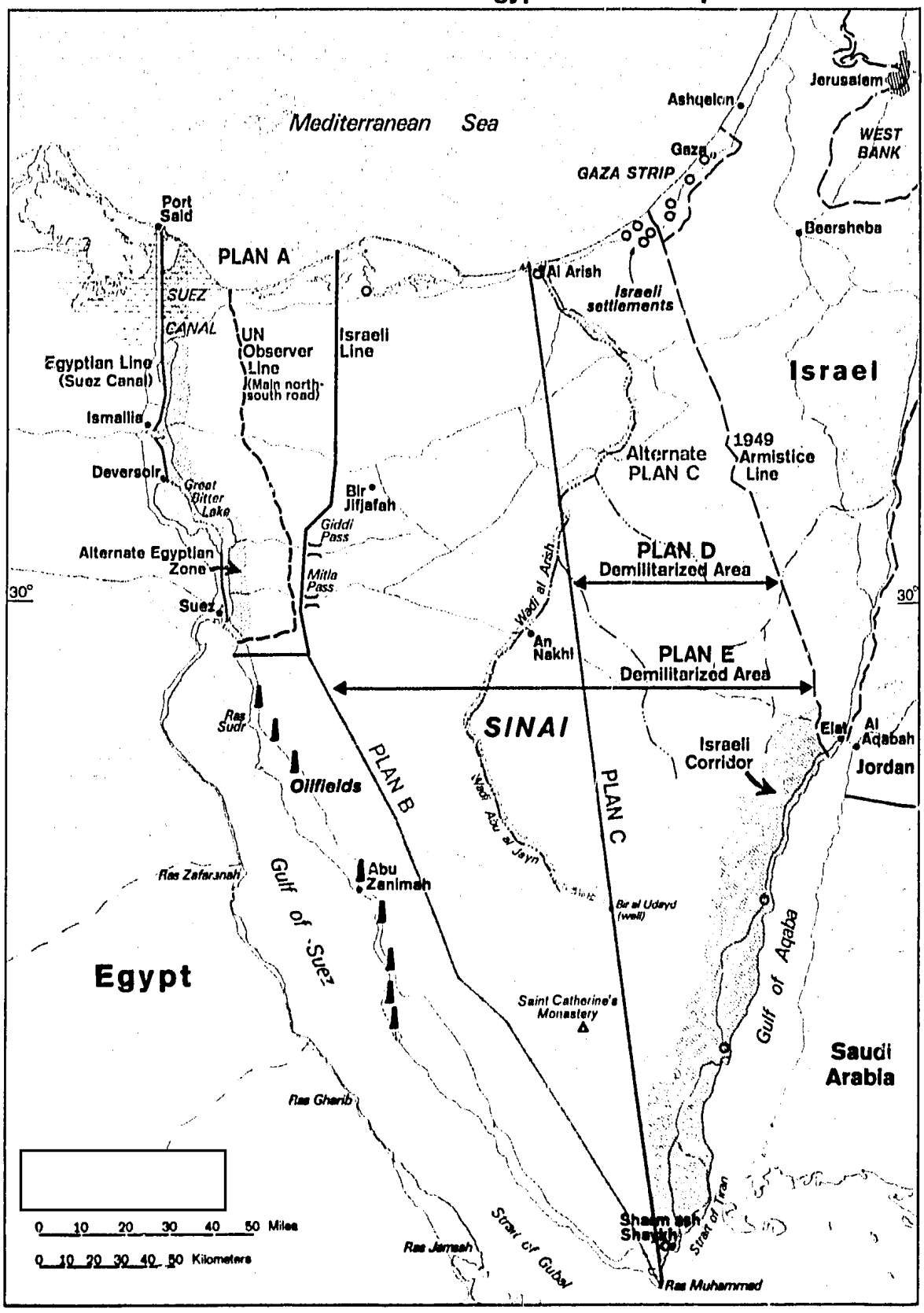
Cease-Fire Lines Between Israel and Egypt: Possible Options



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The Sinai

The Israeli-occupied Frontier Province of Sinai includes all the land between the Suez Canal and the Israeli border as well as the triangular-shaped Sinai Peninsula which lies between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba. A narrow coastal plain in the north is terminated by a series of plateaus and hills that become increasingly rugged to the south where many peaks reach elevations greater than 2,400 meters (8,000 feet). Most of the Sinai is barren desert. The major water source is the Wadi al Arish, outlet for a vast underground river system fed by rain from the southern mountains. Where this "river" system is close to the surface there are both natural oases and fields irrigated by water from wells. Most of Sinai's 100,000 inhabitants live in the vicinity of the oasis of Al Arish in coastal villages, in small scattered oases, and in the higher country in the south near St. Catherine's Monastery. True nomads in the Sinai probably number no more than 2,000. Oil reserves found along the western coast and offshore in the Gulf of Suez are the most important economic resources. The southern tip of the peninsula commands the narrow Strait of Tiran, which links the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea. It was Egyptian closure of this strait to Israeli shipping that triggered the 1967 war.

Five cease-fire plans for the Sinai are outlined below:

Plan A. The Israeli forces would pull back to new defensive positions east of the Suez Canal. Their line would extend due south from a point approximately 60 kilometers (37 miles) from the canal on the Mediterranean coast, jog slightly to the west around the Giddi and Mitla passes, and then run due west to a point on the Gulf of Suez approximately 25 kilometers (16 miles) north of Ras Sudr. This would permit the Israelis to retain all their settlements, all their major airfields

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and major military bases, and the critical terrain controlling the Giddi and Mitla passes as well as the oil wells and tank farms on the Gulf of Suez. The observer line would be along the main north-south road some 25-30 kilometers (16-19 miles) east of the canal. The Egyptians would withdraw to the west of the canal. As a second version of this plan the Egyptians could be stationed along a strip some 10 kilometers (6 miles) wide on the eastern side of the canal.

To the Egyptians, the first version of this plan would only represent a return to the situation existing prior to their attack of 6 October 1973. To the Israelis it would mean yielding observation and direct fire positions over a water barrier and approximately 7,600 square kilometers (2,900 square miles) of maneuver area. The second version would enable the Egyptians to open and operate the canal, but might be regarded by them as merely a step toward the recovery of their lost territory and by the Israelis as the surrender of a tactically important physical barrier.

Plan B. Plan B uses the north-south element of the Israeli line of Plan A, and extends it southeastward as a line running approximately 32 kilometers (20 miles) inland and parallel to the western coast of the Sinai to Ras Muhammad, at the very tip of the peninsula. This arrangement would give Egypt control of the western coast of the Sinai, the Sinai oilfields, and the Suez Canal. It would permit Israel to retain most of the Sinai, including Sharm ash Shaykh and control over the Strait of Tiran. Because of the extreme ruggedness of the terrain it would be infeasible to post a UN observer force on the ground along the Plan B line south of 30 degrees north. Necessary policing could probably be accomplished from the air.

This plan would not please either side. Israel would not like losing the oilfields, and Egypt would not like relinquishing claim to the

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major portion of the Sinai. Egypt, however, has a strong claim that Israel is working the fields in violation of international law. The return of the oilfields might persuade Egypt to yield the rest of the Sinai to Israel, and Israel might believe that retaining the bulk of Sinai would offer reasonable protection.

Plan C. Plan C divides the Sinai by a line running south from a point just west of Al Arish to Ras Muhammad at the tip of the Peninsula. It would be desirable to demilitarize the mountainous territory between this line and the edge of the hill country to the west, which would coincide with line B. This line is the most arbitrary of those considered and is more difficult to support on the basis of terrain, economic, or military considerations, but it has some precedent. During the 1906 British--Turkish Sinai boundary negotiations this line was put forward as a Turkish alternate proposal. There were indications that Israel considered bargaining for the line as a Sinai boundary during the 1956 conflict.

The advantage of this boundary is that it is easily defined on a map and divides the Sinai neatly, giving Israel Al Arish (with the only sizable sweet water resources in the Sinai) and putting the western shore of the Gulf of Aqaba firmly under Israeli control. It would be difficult to demarcate on the ground, but for most of its length the boundary runs through such rugged, inhospitable terrain that barring the discovery of oil, its exact location would be of little concern to either side. The difference in the economic significance of this line as compared to Plan B or Plan D is minute. Except in the extreme north and in the vicinity of St. Catherine's Monastery, there is nothing of value for many miles on either side. It would provide each nation with a broad buffer zone.

A dividing line for a variant of Plan C would begin at the same point on the Mediterranean, and run southeastward to the point at which it would

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meet Wadi al Arish. It would then follow the main channel of Wadi al Arish to the southwest, passing through the settlement An Nakhl and continuing along Wadi al Arish to the mouth of Wadi Abu al Jayn. It would then follow the bed of Abu al Jayn to its head and continue southeast until joining the primary Plan C line near Bir al Udayd.

This variant would have the advantage of being more readily recognizable on the ground and of providing some quid pro quo for trading purposes. The area gained by Israel would be larger; that gained by Egypt would be smaller but more accessible, more habitable, and provided with a better water supply.

Plan D. Plan D uses the Al Arish--Ras Muhammad line of Plan C as the Egyptian cease-fire line. The Egyptians would be given all of the Sinai west of this line. The Israelis would be placed east of the 1949 Armistice line but would be granted a 20 kilometer (12 mile) corridor along the Gulf of Aqaba coast from Elat to Ras Muhammad. This would give them control over the Strait of Tiran. The area enclosed by the Al Arish--Ras Muhammad line, the 1949 Armistice line, and the Gulf of Aqaba corridor would be demilitarized, giving the Israelis a sizable buffer zone.

The most strenuous objection to this plan would probably come from the Israelis. It would push their army and their settlements completely out of the Sinai except for the Aqaba corridor. They might not consider the demilitarized zone sufficiently secure. But a proposal similar to this was included in the comprehensive Allon Plan which indicates that at least some sectors of the Israeli Government might be receptive to it.

Plan E. This plan would combine the north-south line of Plan B and the demilitarization of Plan D on a significantly larger scale and would require the total Israeli evacuation of the Sinai. Egypt would reoccupy territory up to the Plan B line, and the remainder of the entire peninsula, including

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Sharm ash Shaykh, would be demilitarized. This area could be placed under the control of an international force--withdrawable only by a bilateral Egyptian-Israeli decision sanctioned by the Security Council--that could, if effective, guarantee Israeli shipping through the Strait of Tiran.

The Israelis would object seriously to this plan, not only for its requirement in general for a total withdrawal, but for the reason that it would necessitate giving up the settlements. Israel would also not feel assured of the efficacy of international guarantees, no matter how strongly backed up and theoretically enforceable. For Egypt, on the other hand, this is the only plan that would be considered viable and the only one likely to ensure against further Egyptian attempts to retake territory by force.

A variant of this plan would demilitarize the area from the Plan B line to the 1949 armistice line with the exception of the Israeli corridor provided in Plan D. From the Israeli standpoint, this would be somewhat more satisfactory than the first version and, because of the larger demilitarized zone provided, far better than Plan D. The same Israeli objections to a virtual total withdrawal and to giving up the settlements would apply, however. The Egyptians would find the plan unacceptable for the very reasons that the Israelis would find it at all attractive.

The Golan Heights

The Golan Heights is a semi-arid tract of rocky hills and brush-covered plains 65 kilometers (40 miles) long and 20 kilometers (12 miles) wide. From the former Israeli-Syrian border the terrain rises abruptly to rugged hills standing 600 meters (2,000 feet) above the upper Jordan Valley and Lake Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee). East of these hills, a rolling plain rises toward the northeast; its highest elevations are formed by a line of volcanic hills extending from the steep lower slopes of Mount Hermon in the north to the Wadi ar Ruqqad, a deeply incised stream valley in the south.

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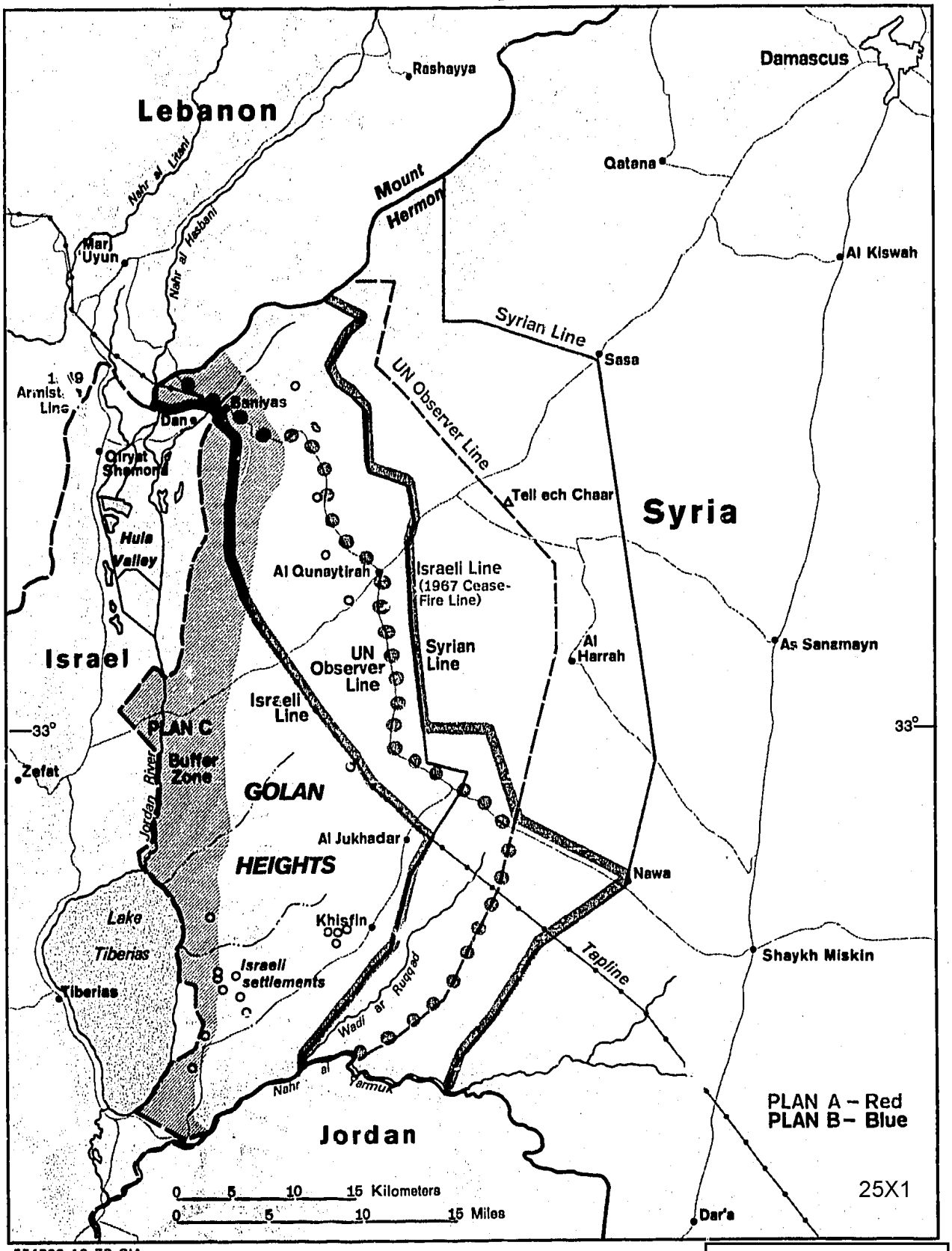
Cease-Fire Line Between Israel and Syria: Possible Options



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Much of the region is agricultural land. The area around the city of Al Qunaytirah was once an important producer of wheat. Land too steep or rocky for farming is used for pasture. Before the 1967 war the population in the Golan Heights was in excess of 100,000, and the density of the rural population was about 80 persons per square kilometer (200 persons per square mile). Most of the inhabitants fled eastward when the Israelis took over in 1967.

The Israelis consider possession of the high ground overlooking the upper Jordan Valley and Lake Tiberias to be vital to their national defense; prior to the 1967 war they were subject to intermittent sniping from the Golan Heights. The Syrians consider themselves the rightful owners, and their resentment at being ejected from their own territory is compounded by the vulnerability of Damascus; there are no effective terrain barriers between their capital and the occupied Golan, less than 60 kilometers (37 miles) to the southwest.

In addition to military considerations, other factors influence Israeli reluctance to give up occupied territory in the Golan Heights. They have (since 1967) established numerous new settlements throughout much of the area and have expended considerable efforts in road building, water development, land reclamation, and other projects. In effect, they have converted a sizable portion of formerly Syrian territory into an increasingly integral part of Israel.

Four possible sets of cease-fire lines are presented below.

Plan A. The Israelis would withdraw to the 1967 Israeli cease-fire line. A UN observer line would be fixed along key terrain features, varying from about 4 to 8 kilometers (3 to 5 miles) east of the 1967 cease-fire line. The Syrian forces would be positioned an approximately equal distance east of the observer line. Syria would lose no sizable

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villages or other populated places of significance, and the immediate threat to Damascus would be removed. Syrian forces would make a slight advance to the west. Depending on how the demilitarized zone was administered, some Syrians displaced in 1967 might find it possible to return to their former lands. Most of the central and western parts of the Golan Heights would probably continue to be denied to the Syrians. Damascus, although saved from imminent danger of capture, might still feel vulnerable to attack. Most of the area would remain under Israeli influence, and the Israelis would retain all of their new settlements; the process of integrating the Golan into Israel could probably continue. For the Israeli military the plan would involve a retreat to the 1967 Israeli cease-fire line. They would be particularly reluctant to surrender hard-won high ground in the vicinity of Mount Hermon. Their forces would be pulled back a considerable distance (e.g., on the road to Damascus, they would be pulled back more than 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the vicinity of Sasa to the vicinity of Al Qunaytirah).

Plan B. The Israelis would withdraw in the north to a position south and west of that portion of the Tapline oil pipeline that extends from the border with Lebanon to the vicinity of Al Jukhadar. In the south their position would be west of the southern portion of the 1967 Israeli cease-fire line. The UN observer line would (for most of its length) extend along the road that runs from Baniyas in the north through Al Qunaytirah to a point where it intercepts the UN observer line of Plan A; the southern segment of the observer line would correspond to the southern segment of the Plan A observer line. The Syrian forces in the north would be permitted as far west as the former Israeli cease-fire line (1967); in the south their line would extend eastward along the 33 degree of latitude for a short distance and then south and east to Nawa and from Nawa to the Jordan Border (corresponding in part to the same segment as in Plan A). The roads would facilitate the deployment and logistical support of the UN

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force. The Israelis would lose none of their new settlements to the Syrians, although some would fall in the UN supervised "demilitarized zone." Syria would regain some of its lost territory in the north. Neither side would be completely satisfied with this plan. The Isarelis would be reluctant to withdraw their military forces from tactically advantageous terrain, and the Syrians would want to regain much more of their former territory.

Plan C. Israeli military forces would be completely withdrawn from the Golan Heights, and a denied area or "buffer zone" varying in width from about three to ten kilometers (2 to 6 miles) would be established along its western side. The denied area would be sufficiently broad to eliminate the threat of sniping from the Golan Heights into Israeli territory to the west. Syria would regain a large part of its lost territory, and the Israelis would abandon all of their new settlements. It appears unlikely at this time that any Israeli government could stand after making such a concession.

Plan D. The Israelis would withdraw completely from the Golan Heights and the entire area would be turned into a demilitarized zone. The UN forces would have greater flexibility of movement and could exert better control in the area. If the UN proved capable of keeping the peace, Israel would be relieved of the burden of maintaining defense forces in the area. Syria would have the satisfaction of seeing an Israeli military withdrawal. The Israelis would probably have to abandon their new settlements to returning Syrians. Again, it is unlikely that any Israeli government could survive such a concession.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem is a city sacred to Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Each has at some time been the dominant population, establishing its own religious

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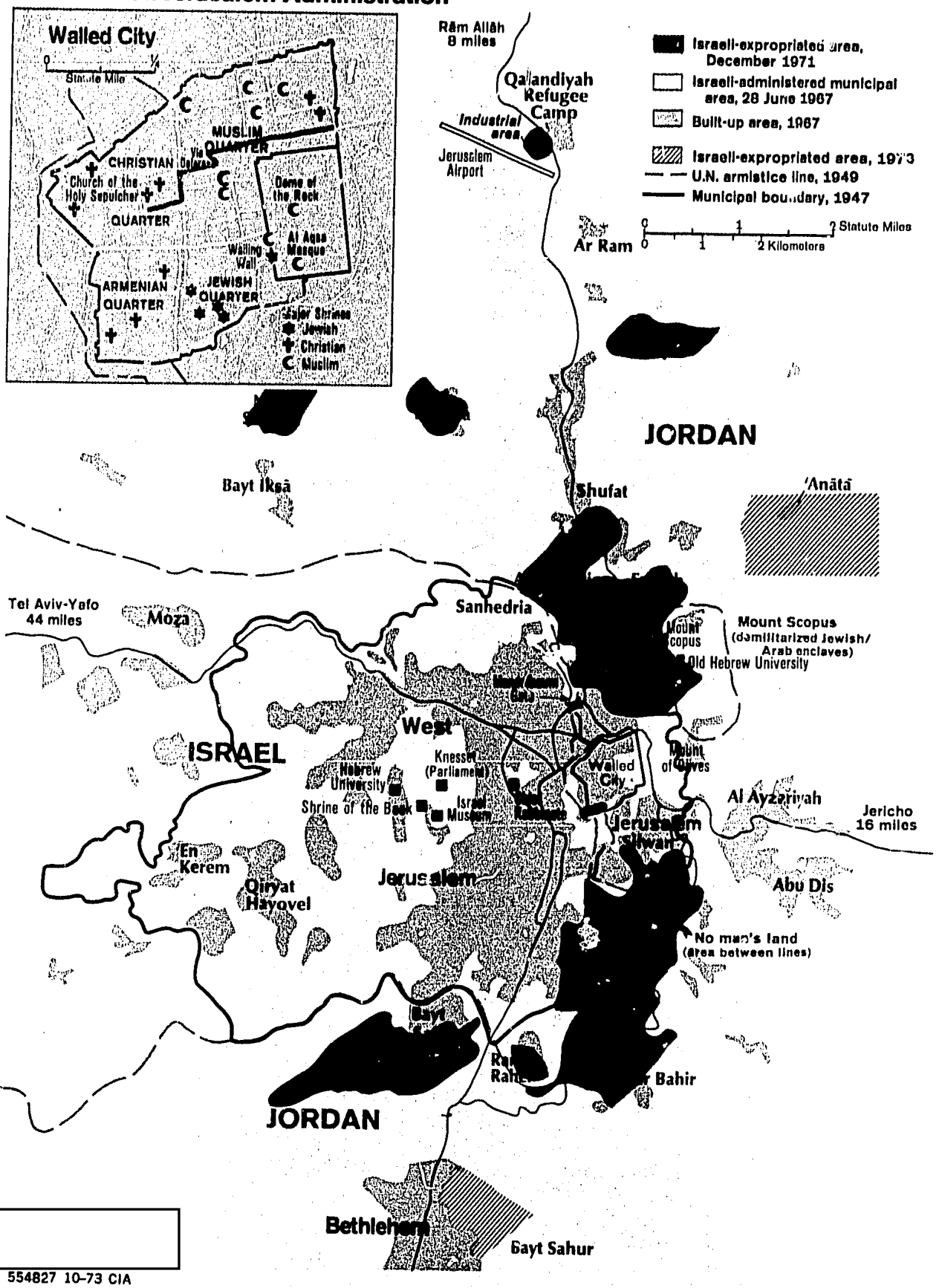
Israel-Jordan Jerusalem Administration



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structures and communities. Four residential quarters, Armenian, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish are enclosed by the Old City's walls, but sites sacred to all are so numerous and widely dispersed that delimitation of large areas by religious shrines is impossible.

The Dome of the Rock where Solomon prayed, Jesus preached, and Muhammad ascended to Heaven lies in the southeast corner of the Old City bordered by Jewish and Muslim quarters. This site and its mosques, the third most important shrine in the Muslim world, is about 120 meters (400 feet) from the Western (Wailing) Wall, the most important site in Judaism. Also within 180 meters (600 feet) of the Dome of the Rock begins the Via Dolorosa, the path that Jesus walked in his last hours. This street extends for about 1 kilometer (half a mile) westward through the Muslim quarter to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Christian quarter.

Religious sites are not limited to the Old City, and as the city's growth has extended beyond its walls, conflicts have arisen over the development of surrounding areas such as the Mount of Olives and the south Jerusalem-Bethlehem area. At this time the Jerusalem municipality has approximately 283,000 Jews, 13,000 Christians, and 69,000 Muslims.

Any proposed international city plan for Jerusalem would be rejected by the Israelis. King Husayn, despite a generally hard stance on the status of those portions of the city formerly under Jordanian control, might be willing to settle for some arrangement that would permit a shared Israeli-Jordanian administration; his United Arab Kingdom plan proposed Jerusalem as the capital of Jordan's West Bank region, but did not specifically exclude the possibility of continued Israeli administration. Husayn would find himself under heavy pressure from other Arabs, however--particularly King Faysal--if he indicated a willingness to settle for anything less than full Arab control, allowing for Israeli access to Jewish

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holy places. Faysal regards himself as the defender of Islamic holy places and sees Jerusalem as the issue in the Arab struggle with Israel. The latest conflict has brought this even more keenly to his attention as an issue whose settlement he can force by the use of his oil weapon.

Israel declared Jerusalem its capital in 1950 and began building national offices in the West Jerusalem sector. After the capture of Arab East Jerusalem in the June 1967 war, the Israelis merged that section of the city and its 70,000 inhabitants with former Israeli West Jerusalem and proclaimed the united city as the capital of Israel. (The United States does not recognize Jerusalem as the capital; the US Embassy is in Tel Aviv.)

The Israelis consider the Jerusalem issue non-negotiable and the unification irreversible; they state flatly that the city will remain under Israeli sovereignty, and Israel's administrative actions are openly designed to make it almost impossible to divide it again. Prime Minister Golda Meir stated in April 1973 that "Israel has announced her policy that Christian and Muslim holy places be administered by the respective heads of these religions. To this end Israel wishes to enter into special agreements with the heads of the various denominations for the detailed implementation of this policy."

The Israelis have steadily moved towards "Israelization" of the city. A law passed by the Knesset on 27 June 1967 tripled the former municipal boundaries from 36 square kilometers (14 square miles) to 103 square kilometers (40 square miles), merged the city into one, and brought Israeli law and administration to the enlarged capital. In 1971, the Israelis began to expropriate privately owned Arab lands as building sites. In 1973, additional areas outside the municipal boundaries were expropriated.

Within the expanded municipal area, the Israelis are well advanced on a program of housing construction designed to provide a resident Jewish majority throughout the city. The Jewish Quarter in the Old

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City from which Jews were expelled in 1948, is now largely Arab, but it is being rebuilt and most of the Arabs will be replaced by Jews. By late 1972 some 12,000 Jews had moved into East Jerusalem.

Other steps toward unification taken by the Israelis include the movement of Israeli Government offices into East Jerusalem, and the consolidation of various municipal services, such as electricity, water, and communications. The Jerusalem municipal council operates like other Israeli municipalities except that it receives more Cabinet guidance. The non-Israeli inhabitants of East Jerusalem are taxed as Israelis but are not eligible to vote in Knesset elections or to be appointed state employees.

Muslims and Christians have complained that the extension of Israeli law and administration over them prejudices their rights. Prime Minister Meir's proposal which provides for separate control over special sacred sites, does not concern itself specifically with the rights of the members of the different faiths. It is conceivable that the area east of the 1949 UN Armistice line might be governed by a council of mixed faiths so that Christians, Muslims, and others would feel their case was being heard and their lives governed more by peers rather than an imposed Israeli authority.

The Allon Plan

Minister of Labor (now Deputy Prime Minister) Yigal Allon placed his "Plan" for dealing with the occupied territories before the Israeli Government in July 1967, about a month after the end of the 1967 war. It has never been officially considered by the Knesset, but it has been around, and many of its elements have been implemented during the past six years. At the time it was submitted the plan primarily called for the retention and settlement of the Golan Heights; a string of Israeli settlements in a Security Zone some 15-25 kilometers (9 to 16 miles) wide on the western bank of the Jordan River; annexation of the Gaza Strip; retention of all of Jerusalem and retention of a strip of land along the east coast of Sinai including Sharm ash Shaykh and the terrain commanding the Strait of Tiran.

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